

Indiana Commission on Rehabilitation Services



Annual Report

Federal Fiscal Year 2005

**Assisting Vocational Rehabilitation
Services in Finding Work for
Hoosiers with Disabilities**



INDIANA COMMISSION ON REHABILITATION SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2005

OCTOBER 1, 2004 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2005



GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR!

The Indiana Commission on Rehabilitation Services represents Hoosiers with disabilities seeking employment through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services.

The federal Rehabilitation Act requires each state to establish a council to review and advise the public Vocational Rehabilitation program and to evaluate the effectiveness of its services, including employment outcomes and customer satisfaction. Commission members are appointed by the Governor, and the majority of members have a disability.

The Commission acts as a partner with Vocational Rehabilitation Services and disability-related councils in Indiana and across the nation toward the shared mission of promoting full employment and independence for people with disabilities. The Commission assists in planning regular statewide assessments of vocationally-related needs of Hoosiers with disabilities; is involved in developing the Vocational Rehabilitation Services state plan; reviews current and proposed State policies and procedures related to Vocational Rehabilitation Services; reviews appeals and service eligibility issues; and develops position statements for advocacy on public policy issues that impact employment for people with disabilities in Indiana. During this past year the Commission has worked very closely with Vocational Rehabilitation Services as they updated their Policy and Procedure Manual.

Public input and feedback is extremely important to us. An open forum for input from our guests is part of each meeting's agenda. The Commission makes a concerted effort to have at least one member present at the annual Governor's Council for People with Disabilities conference, the Arc of Indiana convention, the Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facility conference, the IN*SOURCE conference, and others to stay in tune with the various issues and challenges. The Commission also assists in developing the customer satisfaction survey, reviews the results and all comments, and together with VR uses these to identify current strengths and areas for improvement, and also to convey to the VR Counselors 'in the field' the positive comments received, with our appreciation for their excellent work.

If you have ever used or applied for VR services, we urge you to contact any member of the Commission with your ideas, concerns, recommendations, or success stories. We'd love to hear from you.

Sincerely,
John Hill, Chair





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HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1992 and 1998, requires the State vocational rehabilitation agency to establish a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Council members are appointed by the Governor and serve no more than two consecutive full terms. No term can exceed three years.

In Indiana, the State Rehabilitation Council is named the Commission on Rehabilitation Services. All Rehabilitation Act references to the “Council” in this report are applicable to the Commission.

The Commission was established under the preexisting Indiana Rehabilitation Commission. As required by the Rehabilitation Act, the Commission is composed of individuals representative of the following categories.

- Statewide Independent Living Council
- Parent Training and Information Center
- Client Assistance Program
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- Community Rehabilitation Program
- Business, Industry, and Labor
- Disability Advocacy Groups
- Current or Former Applicants or Recipients of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- IN Department of Workforce Development
- IN Department of Education



MEMBERSHIP

The majority of the Commission members are individuals who have a disability, and are not employed by Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The Commission on Rehabilitation Services is comprised of the following members.

Representing a Parent Training and Information Center:

SALLY HAMBURG**

IN*SOURCE

1703 South Ironwood Drive
South Bend, IN 46613

Representing a Community Rehabilitation Program:

KAREN LUEHMANN**

4829 East State Road 252
Franklin, IN 46131

Representing the Indiana Council on Independent Living:

JODI JAMES*

220 E. 8TH Street
Michigan City, IN 46360

Representing the Client Assistance Program:

SUE BEECHER

Indiana Protection and Advocacy
4701 N. Keystone Avenue, Suite 222
Indianapolis, IN 46205

Representing Business, Industry, and Labor:

MARY ILU ALTMAN, Ph.D., SECRETARY (*Appointed May 13, 2005*)

Director of Student Services and Diversity Enhancement
Purdue School of Nursing, Johnson Hall of Nursing
502 N. University Street, Room 109 B
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2069

TONY EURTON*

Kentucky Business Sellers
2106 Plantside Drive, Suite #6
Louisville, KY 46307

BASHIR A. MASOODI * **

315 Magnolia Drive
Crown Point, IN 46307

MARGE TOWELL-CHEESMAN

10160 Basalt Court
Noblesville, IN 46460

NOTE: * = A single asterick identifies a person with a disability.

** = A double asterisk identifies those individuals whose terms expired or who resigned during federal fiscal year 2005.



MEMBERSHIP

Representing Advocacy Groups, Individuals with Disabilities, representing Individuals with Disabilities, and Former and Current VRS Customers:

NANCY FORD-WINTERS*

Branches for Disabilities, Inc.
4433 Four Season Circle
Indianapolis, IN 46226

JASON MALONEY,* VICE-CHAIRPERSON *(until May 13, 2005)*

6608 Illinois Avenue
Hammond, IN 46323

ALICE OLSON,* CHAIRPERSON *(appointed May 13, 2005)*

1304 Redwing Road
Valparaiso, IN 46383

BONNA O'TOOLE**

3896 N. U.S. Highway 41
Vincennes, IN 47591

JANE SMIDEBUSH

P.O. Box 726
Nashville, IN 47448

Representing the IN Department of Workforce Development

CAROL BAKER ** SECRETARY *(until May 13, 2005)*

IN Department of Workforce Development/Implementation Unit
10 n. Senate, 3rd Floor, Room 304
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Representing the IN Department of Education

JOHN HILL, CHAIRPERSON *(until May 13, 2005)*

VICE-CHAIRPERSON *(appointed May 13, 2005)*

IN Department of Education/Division of Special Education
Room 229, Statehouse
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798

NOTE: * = A single asterick identifies a person with a disability.

** = A double asterick identifies those individuals whose terms expired or who resigned during federal fiscal year 2005.



MEMBERSHIP

Ex-officio members:

MICHAEL HEDDEN, DIRECTOR

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
Indiana Government Center South,
W453 P.O. Box 7083
Indianapolis, IN 46207-7083

BARBARA KEESLING

Vocational Rehabilitation Services
415 South Branson Street
Marion, IN 46953-2095

During Federal Fiscal Year 2006 (October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006), the Commission will continue to identify potential candidates for the Governor's consideration in making appointments.

NOTE: * = A single asterick identifies a person with a disability.

** = A double asterisk identifies those individuals whose terms expired or who resigned during federal fiscal year 2005.



MISSION STATEMENT

Assist Persons With Disabilities To Achieve Employment and Independence

VALUES

- VALUE 1** We value persons with disabilities and their equal opportunity to: maximize employment; independence; and, to fully participate in their rehabilitation program.
- VALUE 2** We value quality services for persons with disabilities to achieve employment and independence.
- VALUE 3** We value staff as Vocational Rehabilitation's greatest resource.

The Commission on Rehabilitation Services recognizes the Vocational Rehabilitation Services **Mission & Values** as an integral part of their activities and functions.

INDIANA COMMISSION ON REHABILITATION SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2005



COMMISSION FUNCTIONS

The Commission's responsibilities are outlined in Section 105 of the United States Rehabilitation Act. In performing the following functions, the Commission must consult with the State Workforce Investment Board.

- Review, analyze, and advise the Vocational Rehabilitation Services program regarding their performance related to eligibility, order of selection, the extent, scope and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services, and functions performed by Vocational Rehabilitation Services that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve an employment outcome.

In partnership with the Vocational Rehabilitation Services program;

- Develop, agree to, and review the state's goals and priorities;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services program and submit an annual report to the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration;
- conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment, every three years, of individuals with disabilities living in the state;
- Advise Vocational Rehabilitation Services regarding its activities;
- Assist in the preparation of the State Plan, amendments to the Plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations, including those necessary for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services program to satisfy the requirements of developing a comprehensive system of personnel development and establishing an order of selection;
- Review and analyze the effectiveness of and customer satisfaction with Vocational Rehabilitation Services' functions, services provided by Vocational Rehabilitation Services and others, and employment outcomes achieved by Vocational Rehabilitation Services customers.
- Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner of the U. S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration on the status of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program in the state; and make the report available to the public.
- Coordinate the activities of the State Rehabilitation Council with the activities of other councils, such as the State Independent Living Council (SILC), the advisory panel established under the Individuals with Disabilities Education



COMMISSION FUNCTIONS

Act (IDEA), the State Developmental Disabilities Council, the State Mental Health Planning Council, and the State Workforce Investment Board.

- Provide for the coordination and the establishment of working relationships between Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the State Independent Living Council and the Centers for Independent Living, and
- Perform other functions that are determined appropriate and comparable to the State Rehabilitation Council's other functions, provided they are consistent with the purpose of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and its implementing regulations.



COMMITTEES

The Commission's committees and sub-committees meet on an "as needed" basis. Committee functions are briefly outlined below.

The Policy & Oversight Committee consults with Vocational Rehabilitation Services on the development, implementation, and revision of State policies and procedures pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services; reviews appeals; advises Vocational Rehabilitation Services on eligibility and the scope and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services and activities, and the functions that affect individual employment outcomes. The committee's purpose relates to the implementation of policies and procedures rather than the day to day management of the program, and will involve researching issues brought before the Commission.

The Planning and Evaluation Committee functions in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to fulfill all planning, evaluating, and reporting responsibilities as defined in the Rehabilitation Act, through the establishment of the following four sub-committees:

Needs Assessment—In coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, conducts a statewide needs assessment every three years.

Goals and Priorities—In coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, develops, agrees to, and reviews State goals and priorities, and incorporates customer input from public forums, satisfaction surveys, etc.

State Plan—In coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, prepares the State Plan and amendments, ensuring compliance with all Rehabilitation Act requirements.

Evaluation and Reporting—In coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, evaluates the effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, and reports annual progress to the Rehabilitation Services Administration; evaluates achievement of the State Plan, including the goals, priorities, and all other requirements of the Rehabilitation Act; and prepares and submits an annual report to the Governor, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the public on the status of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. For each required report, the committee will determine the content and provide it to the Public Outreach Committee for report design.

The Customer Satisfaction Committee solicits, reviews, and analyses customer input and/or satisfaction with the functions of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to include services and employment outcomes,



COMMITTEES

and conducts such activities as necessary to assess satisfaction and obtain feedback, such as written and/or telephone surveys, public forums, focus groups, etc.

The Public Outreach Committee coordinates public education efforts, including advocacy and publicizing positive outcome data; plans special events; develops the approach and strategies to enhance the image and vitality of the Commission, and coordinates outreach and marketing; designs and prepares materials for effective communication with customers, the public, the Governor, Legislators, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration, including reports, brochures, etc.

The Recruitment Committee is responsible for general recruitment and the nomination of candidates who are interested in serving on the Commission. The names of potential candidates are subsequently submitted to the Governor for consideration. The committee also ensures that the nominations for Commission Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary are solicited when necessary.



FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2005 MEETINGS

Six Commission meetings were held during federal fiscal year 2005. The Commission conducted business meetings on November 10, 2004, January 11, 2005, March 11, 2005, May 13, 2005, July 8, 2005, and September 9, 2005. In networking with Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff and customers, the decision was made to conduct one business meeting per year outside the Indianapolis area to enable the Commission to meet with Vocational Rehabilitation Services customers and field staff. In federal year 2005, the meeting was held in Kokomo, Indiana.

Throughout the year, the Commission members received many Vocational Rehabilitation Services documents and reports to include: VRS Deputy Director Report; Automation Updates and Fiscal Reports; Policy and Procedure Manual Proposed Revisions; Customer Satisfaction Survey Highlights and Proposed Revision; Needs Assessment Proposal; Federal Fiscal Year 2005 Proposed Outcomes; Federal Program Evaluation Standards; Annual Revisions to the Title I State Plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, and its Title VI, Part B Supplement for Supported Employment Services; appeal decisions, and the RSA 722 Report—Resolution of Applicant/Client Appeals.

Presentations were made on topics to include information regarding State Legislation, the IN Department of Education, Special Education, the Bureau of Aging and In-Home Services, Blind and Visually Impaired Services, the IN Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IN-ARF) and the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities.



COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

Following are some of the accomplishments achieved during federal fiscal year 2005.

- Provided input into Vocational Rehabilitation Services policies.
- Collaborated with Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the development of the annual revisions to the State Plan, to include the Goals and Priorities and Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- Attended State Plan public hearings and provided comments,
- Responded to a letter sent to several Commission members by a former Vocational Rehabilitation Services customer.
- Participated in the work group to develop the RCEP, Region V Training for State Rehabilitation Councils that was held in Chicago in the spring of 2005,
- Provided feedback regarding the VRS Customer Satisfaction Survey proposed revision,
- Reviewed the VRS Needs Assessment and officially approved it,
- Approved new graphics design for the Commission's brochure,
- Reviewed Vocational Rehabilitation Services appeal decisions and made recommendations for changes when systemic issues were identified.
- Recommended that Vocational Rehabilitation Services purchase adequate tape recording equipment for each Impartial Hearing Officer and Mediator to ensure quality tapes for duplication and transcription purposes,
- Drafted a letter to the Deputy Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services regarding the concerns outlined by the Commission member who represents the IN Council on Independent Living,
- Networked with other Governor appointed Boards, Councils, and Commissions, as well as agencies and organizations, to enhance the visibility of the Commission by participating in several events throughout the year.
- Improved communication with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors by providing to them on a regular basis a summary of the customer satisfaction survey comments,
- Expanded the Commission's knowledge in such areas as State legislation, the IN Department of Education, the Bureau of Aging and In-home Services, Blind and Visually Impaired Services, and the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities.
- Ensured that the Commission's membership was in compliance with federal mandates, and strengthened diversity among the Commission's membership.



COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Vocational Rehabilitation Services has been actively responsive and supportive of the Commission on Rehabilitation Services' suggestions and recommendations made throughout the year. The Commission members established forums in working with other Boards, Councils and agencies, and have provided Vocational Rehabilitation Services with the comments received during these outreach activities. During the past 24 months, the Commission held a series of public forums throughout the state to obtain public input regarding Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Based upon the information received at these forums, the Commission worked with the Vocational Rehabilitation Services agency this year to update and revise policies related to Transition from School to Work.

INPUT INTO FFY 2005 STATE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

On January 11, 2005, members of the Commission met with key Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff who are responsible for drafting specific State Plan attachments. In addition, all interested parties were given the opportunity to provide comment during the public hearings, held in five areas of the state, or by mail, or electronically.

The following suggestions, which were made relative to specific State Plan attachments, have been acted on by Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff.

Attachment 4.9(c): Interagency Cooperation With Other Agencies And Entities

The suggestion was made to reference collaboration with the Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IN-ARF) and the Arc of Indiana. It was also suggested that acronyms be prefaced with the entire term. Specific to transition services, Senate Bill 290 should be referenced.

Information about the Assistive Technology Task Force, the Employment Leadership Network, and Social Security Benefits Planning and Outreach expansion was discussed with the Commission during the January 11, 2005 meeting. The Commission supported the inclusion of this information in the attachment.

In addition to some recommended deletions, text revisions included adding the statement that Vocational Rehabilitation Services supports an open system and welcomes competition with vocational rehabilitation choice among qualified not-for-profit and for-profit providers.

Attachment 4.11(b): Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

In regard to succession planning, it was suggested that reference be made to the impact that staff promotions have on this process. It was also suggested that the newly developed Appeal Procedures Training for Impartial Hearing Officers and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors be referenced in the attachment.



COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

PUBLIC HEARING — MARCH 1, 2005, INDIANAPOLIS

A member of the Commission who represents the Client Assistance Program provided the following testimony at the public hearing held in Indianapolis on March 1, 2005.

It is admirable and worthy to note that Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) successfully rehabilitated 5,000 individuals in 2004. The Client Assistance Program (CAP) offers the following comments in regards to Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation's 2005 Proposed Annual Revisions to the State Plan.

- 1) CAP supports the continued training of the 166 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in Indiana. This training should be ongoing in relationship to a number of pertinent topics. CAP continues to observe inconsistency in regards to eligibility, client choice, and services to be provided not only from one VR field office to another but also in regards to VR Counselors within the same field office.
- 2) CAP is especially pleased to note in Section 4.11 (b) of the State Plan that VR plans to provide all staff with training specific to individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). This becomes an even higher priority as related to President Bush's current budget proposal, which would, if approved, eliminate the federal TBI program in its entirety.
- 3) CAP would recommend ongoing training in relationship to individuals with mental illness and the unique issues posed in providing these individuals with rehabilitation and vocational training.
- 4) CAP is pleased to note the increased emphasis on VR participation in the lives of transition aged students but would contend that transition services must improve dramatically overall in the state of Indiana. VR Counselors must be required to become involved on a more consistent basis and increase the coordination of services as they relate to transition aged students. Transition aged students should be a priority for Indiana VR.
- 5) CAP is pleased to note VR's proposed increased involvement with individuals who have visual impairments or are blind, as documented in attachment 4.12(c)(1). CAP is amply aware that VR frequently provides training to an individual with a visual impairment only to have that same individual wait, sometimes for years, to receive services via Blind and Visually Impaired Services (BVIS). CAP recommends that BVIS be moved under the umbrella of Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services so that better coordination is accomplished allowing for increased vocational outcomes for individuals with visual impairments. VR and BVIS are not currently working together to allow for successful employment outcomes.



COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6) CAP again requests that Indiana VR consider procuring feedback from customers whose VR cases are not closed as "successful". Section 4.12 (e) documents that only VR customers determined to be "successful closures" provide input into how the VR process can be improved. Over 44% of Indiana VR customers do not achieve an employment outcome. Determining how and why those individuals did not achieve an employment outcome would provide valuable information to the VR agency in terms of provision of rehabilitation and vocational services. Such feedback would provide VR with information needed to achieve a higher percentage of employment outcomes.

COMMISSION ON REHABILITATION SERVICES MEETING - MARCH 11, 2005

In regard to comments about the VRS State Plan, the Commission endorsed the comments made during the Indianapolis public hearing by the Commission member who represents the Client Assistance Program. It was agreed that the comments should be included, in this State Plan attachment, as referenced above.

In addition, the Indiana Council on Independent Living (ICOIL) representative on the Commission expressed concern about the reference in the State Plan pre-print regarding State Plan Attachment 4.9(c): Interagency Cooperation With Other Agencies And Entities. Specific to coordination with the statewide independent living council and independent living centers, the pre-print includes the stated assurance that "The designated State unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 105 of the Act, and the independent living centers described in part C of Title VII of the Act within the State have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities." There was concern expressed about whether this is occurring. It was suggested that this be expanded in the attachment and identified as a goal. The Commission members endorsed this concern and made the motion to draft a letter to the Deputy Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 15, 2005, the Deputy Director met with Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff who worked on the development of the State Plan to discuss the comments made during the Commission's March 11, 2005 meeting, as well as other public comments received. State Plan Attachment 4.9(c) was revised to expand the paragraph regarding Centers for Independent Living and Independent Living Programs.

Following the State Plan Development meeting, all staff involved in preparing specific State Plan attachments made note of the Commission's recommendations and have incorporated them into the draft documents being prepared for public comments. The testimony provided by a Commission member during a public hearing has been shared with VRS Management and will be used for future program planning purposes.



COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

INPUT INTO THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL (PPM)

On January 11, 2005, the Commission met with the Deputy Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to provide input into newly drafted policies. The following summary addresses comments and recommendations made by specific members of the Commission on Rehabilitation Services and includes the Vocational Rehabilitation Services responses and clarifications, as appropriate.

A Commission member, who could not attend the January 11, 2005 meeting, electronically shared comments and suggestions, as outlined below.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PPM 300 pertaining to “confidentiality” standards is not listed here. PPM 320 pertaining to “Appeals” is also not listed. Are other PPMs then missing from the Table of Contents as well?

PPM 110—Nondiscrimination and Individual Rights

Page 4 of 5 contains a reference to PPM Chapter 300 “Confidentiality” which is not listed under the Table of Contents section. Page 5 of 5 contains a reference to PPM 320 “Appeals” which is also not noted in the Table of Contents section.

PPM 200—Definitions

Please consider adding the definitions for “Homemaker Services” as well as “Unpaid Family Work”. You speak to the requirements in PPM 451 and given the confusion observed in the field offices regarding these two employment outcomes, definitions are warranted.

PPM 450—Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

Page 5 of 15, first line in policy requires a “,” after the abbreviation “(CAP)” and before the word “the”.

Page 7 of 15—please clarify the wording here. “the Ticket must be assigned to the ...” by whom???? Are you stating that VR services are contingent upon Ticket assignment? If that is so, please cite the federal requirement here. If not, reword to indicate that the VR Counselor is responsible to complete paperwork for Ticket assignment.

Page 15 of 15—what federal or state legislation allows VR to deny services to an individual until the Ticket has been assigned??? Services cannot be contingent upon Ticket assignment! Please consider rewording this so it does not sound like a “rights violation”.

PPM 451—Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), Employment Outcome Selection



COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Page 2 of 12 defines both “homemaking” and “unpaid family work”. Please consider adding these to the definitions section of the PPM. I am glad that these terms are defined thoroughly here.

Page 3 of 12—I am absolutely thrilled that you included verbiage regarding “maximization” and not limiting requested employment outcomes to current level of work! Thank you!!

Page 6 of 12—CAP respectfully objects to the reference of PPM 610 regarding financial participation. This chapter has yet to be written. How can you refer to its requirements in PPM 451?

Page 9 of 12—Again, thank you for defining “substantial homemaking tasks” and “family work outcomes”.

PPM 600—Fiscal Accountability— General Provisions

Again CAP respectfully objects to references of PPM 610 on page 11 of 16. PPM 610 has not been reviewed and is not completely written at this point in time!

All services to be prior authorized - pages 13-14. CAP has assisted with three scenarios in the past year dealing with breakdowns of “van modifications”. Does this policy allow for the flexibility of verbal approval to a vendor who has evaluated and diagnosed the van problem, the van is sitting in the shop, and the individual cannot travel to work or school until said transportation is repaired? Will written authorization stand in the way of a timely repair and jeopardize his/her job? Can verbal approvals be accepted for these scenarios?

During the January 11, 2005 meeting, the following suggestions and comments were made.

PPM 100—Program Mission & Purpose

It was suggested that the “Pledge of Customer Service” be reinstated into the chapter.

PPM 482—Case Closure—Sheltered Work Review

It was suggested that the verbiage be modified on page 4 to ensure that it is not misunderstood and interpreted to mean that Vocational Rehabilitation Services funds can be used to support service provision to individuals in segregated settings. It was suggested that the Code of Federal Regulations be cited in this regard.

482.01 (A)—The suggestion was made to delete the words ““extended employment.”

PPM 600—Fiscal Accountability—General Provisions

Discussion resulted in the conclusion that the process for emergency authorization and alternative signature should be included.



COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

In reference to 600.8, it was suggested that this section refer to PPM 601 and 562.

INPUT INTO THE PROPOSED FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION POLICY

On July 8, 2005, the Commission's business meeting included a presentation regarding the proposed financial participation policy. Commission members were strongly encouraged by the Deputy Director of VRS to provide comments.

A member of the Commission who represents the Client Assistance Program provided the following comments.

Thank you again for all of the work you have put in on the development of this PPM. I enlisted the assistance of one of our attorneys in reviewing the documents that you presented to the Commission earlier this month. She actually sat on the committee and participated in the initial development of the financial participation requirements. She was therefore somewhat familiar with the documents.

In my opinion, the most important question that needs to be answered is the source of and decision making that occurred in regards to the figures represented in Table 3, "FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT ANNUAL DOLLAR CAP BY SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD (divided by 10). As indicated by the Commission, the proportion of required contribution based upon the proportion of income does not appear to be consistent. For example, in regards to a household of one, as income increases from \$35,000 to \$40,000 (just \$5000 difference), the individual's contribution to their VR costs increases by \$500. This increase in contribution seems to be inconsistent with the small increase in income.

Another very important issue deals with VR's current policy and practice on reclaiming VR purchased equipment if someone leaves the program or fails to live up to their IPE responsibilities. As your policies and practices stand now, VR can reclaim VR purchased equipment and indeed has done so in the past. VR has also reclaimed restorative services devices such as hearing aids. Emergency restorative services are the only exemption to the proposed financial participation requirement. If a customer assists in paying for equipment or restorative devices, then he/she has a right to either be reimbursed or allowed to keep the item(s) purchased. Also that customer would have the right to retain ownership if a comparable benefit such as his/her insurance had paid for a portion of the good or device.

Page 17 of PPM 610-610.17 (3) probably needs to specify that copies of the required documents are kept in the VR file as opposed to the original tax return forms, pay stubs, etc. Customers may need to utilize these forms with other federal and state agencies. VR staff need to be sensitive to this and not insist that the originals be kept in the VR files.

The examples of State HH/ Annual Income are nice but could be much more useful



COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

by comparing a HH1 (household of 1) at \$40,000.00, \$60,000.00, and \$80,000.00 as opposed to changing the HH number with the various income levels.

Thanks again for your work on this most important policy.

The Vice Chair of the Commission who represents the Department of Education stated the following.

Once again I want to thank you for the overview of the draft policy that you presented at the Commission meeting last week. My major concern, as I expressed at the meeting, is that we utilized an established formula/method for determining the cost share.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide input.

RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE PROPOSED FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION POLICY

PPM 610 - Financial Participation Table IV, Annual Dollar Cap, 10% of household excess income above threshold (income as well as household size) - a question was raised as to whether it was household income as well as # of individuals receiving services.

The Policy and Procedure Manual was revised as follows.

On page 6 of the draft document, a new paragraph (2)(C) has been added and the current paragraph (C) has been made paragraph (D), to read as follows.

- (C) in a household with two or more eligible individuals participating at the same time in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, any other eligible household member is currently required to participate financially in meeting the costs of his or her vocational rehabilitation services; or
- (D) the income of the household is equal to or less than the annual income threshold used as a base amount for financial participation, computed according to the formula-

income threshold = $3.0 \times$ (the federal poverty guideline, by household size).

Another sentence has also been added to the REQUIRED PRACTICE statement on the same page, so that the text of the statement is as follows.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE.] If the individual is exempted from the financial participation requirement under this section, a completed Financial Participation Requirement Determination form is still required, consistent with section 610.02(3) of this chapter, but must indicate that the individual is exempt and must show a zero FPR percentage and a zero FPR cap. With regard to paragraph (2)(C) of this section, if one individual is currently participating



COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

financially in meeting the costs of his or her VR services, any other individual of the same household is exempted from financial participation, inasmuch as the FPR is based on total household income.]

Finally, on the right side of the first page of the table at the end of the chapter, another point is added under exempt individuals following "whose household is currently receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); or" which reads:

who is the second, third, etc. eligible individual from the same household, if another individual from the same household is already meeting an FPR.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The State VR Agency acknowledged all recommendations made by the Commission on Rehabilitation Services. Every effort will be made to incorporate the Commission's input into all PPM chapter revisions as outlined in this document.

The Commission and the State VR agency have continued to experience a positive working relationship. The State VR agency has either acted on the Commission's recommendations or sought additional information.



COMMISSION OUTREACH

The Commission continues its outreach initiatives. As each Commission member learned about upcoming events/opportunities, he or she was asked to take action to find out if the Commission could be included. The information was then channeled through the Public Outreach Committee who made certain that the appropriate steps were taken to ensure Commission member representation. In addition, all Commission members were asked to seek opportunities to publicize both Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Commission, and provide feedback.

The Commission members achieved their goal of networking with other Governor appointed Boards, Councils, and Commissions, as well as agencies and organizations, which included:

FFY 2005 Activities

October 13-14, 2004	ARC of Indiana Conference
October 21-22, 2004	Fall Conference of the IN Association for Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD) Conference
October 22-23, 2004	IN*SOURCE (Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs) Conference, Fort Wayne, IN
November 8-9, 2004	Commission's Public Forum, 2004 Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities Conference
September 21-22, 2005	Brain Injury Association of Indiana Annual Conference

FFY 2006 Activities to Date

October 21-22, 2005	IN*SOURCE (Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs) Conference, West Lafayette, IN
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A SHARED VISION

The Commission on Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services worked closely throughout federal fiscal year 2005 in assuring that their shared vision for the citizens of Indiana was accomplished through their collaborative efforts.

The Commission has reorganized and undertaken strategic planning as it gears up to work in closer partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services in FFY 2006. In preparing to fulfill its obligations to assist the designated state vocational rehabilitation agency in charting a future course, it is fitting at this year's end to examine the data that are available to assess the effectiveness of the program as it now stands.

VRS STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS

After receiving Vocational Rehabilitation Services, a total of 5,961 individuals with disabilities obtained employment during FFY 2005, which is the highest total in the last two decades. Among this total, 5,699 individuals obtained competitive employment. This was an increase of 940 rehabilitants and an increase of 938 competitive employment outcomes compared to FFY 2004.

These persons obtained employment in the following job types as seen here.




Professional & Technical	1,315
Clerical and Sales	1,216
Service	1,549
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	114
Bench, Machining, & Products	953
Other Competitive Labor Market Jobs	563
Homemaker, Unpaid Family Worker	251

Total Persons Employed 5,961



VRS STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS

Category	Served	Rehabilitated
SENSORY/COMMUNICATIVE IMPAIRMENTS		
Blindness	928	198
Other Visual Impairments	1,173	217
Deafness, Primary Communication Visual	528	90
Deafness, Primary Communication Auditory	235	84
Hearing Loss, Primary Communication Visual	503	212
Hearing Loss, Primary Communication Auditory	3,933	1,895
Other Hearing Impairments (<i>Tinnitus, Meniere's Disease, etc.</i>)	111	42
Deaf-Blindness	19	2
Communicative Impairments (expressive and receptive)	205	43
PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS		
Mobility Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	2,651	321
Manipulation/Dexterity Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	1,095	126
Both Mobility and Manipulation/Dexterity Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	1,659	194
Other Orthopedic Impairments (<i>e.g., limited range of motion</i>)	1,934	223
Respiratory Impairments	322	30
General Physical Debilitation (<i>fatigue, weakness, pain, etc.</i>)	948	74
Other Physical Impairments (<i>not listed above</i>)	1,637	189
MENTAL IMPAIRMENTS		
Cognitive Impairments (<i>impairments involving learning, thinking, processing information, and concentration</i>)	8,052	1,258
Psychosocial Impairments (<i>interpersonal and behavioral Impairments, difficulty coping</i>)	5,458	560
Other Mental Impairments	1,634	203
Totals	33,025	5,961

 The 33,025 individuals served in certification status and beyond (Statuses 10-33) and the 5,961 individuals rehabilitated during FFY 2005 are partitioned by their major disabilities according to federally prescribed disability categories in the table to the left.



VRS STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS

➔ *Numbers and percentages of individuals served in application status and beyond (Statuses 02–33) and rehabilitated in FFY 2005 partitioned by federally prescribed racial categories are shown in the table to the right.*

Racial Group	Served	% Served	Rehabilitated	% Rehabilitated
White	32,477	86.56%	5,463	91.64%
African-American	4,538	12.09%	438	7.35%
American Indian or Eskimo	99	0.26%	7	0.12%
Asian/Pacific Islander	217	0.58%	38	0.64%
Multi-Racial	193	0.15%	15	0.25%

Of the 37,524 individuals served, 571 or 1.52 % also said that they were members of the Latino ethnic group. Similarly, of the 5,961 individuals who were rehabilitated, 76 or 1.27% also said that they were members of the Latino ethnic group.



VRS STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS

	Served	Rehabilitated		Served	Rehabilitated		Served	Rehabilitated
ADAMS	149	33	HENDRICKS	331	61	PIKE	101	14
ALLEN	1,776	191	HENRY	323	34	PORTER	1,018	241
BARTHOLOMEW	534	105	HOWARD	605	110	POSEY	246	26
BENTON	45	6	HUNTINGTON	502	44	PULASKI	81	18
BLACKFORD	168	24	JACKSON	405	76	PUTNAM	169	26
BOONE	255	32	JASPER	125	32	RANDOLPH	303	26
BROWN	70	12	JAY	187	16	RIPLEY	141	24
CARROLL	120	26	JEFFERSON	251	57	RUSH	75	16
CASS	259	72	JENNINGS	334	56	ST. JOSEPH	2,027	351
CLARK	823	120	JOHNSON	466	104	SCOTT	214	29
CLAY	120	19	KNOX	470	68	SHELBY	198	55
CLINTON	138	16	KOSCIUSKO	322	81	SPENCER	108	16
CRAWFORD	83	10	LAGRANGE	121	19	STARKE	104	21
DAVIESS	212	48	LAKE	1,879	273	STEUBEN	149	24
DEARBORN	165	14	LAPORTE	773	200	SULLIVAN	128	29
DECATUR	123	24	LAWRENCE	158	26	SWITZERLAND	41	13
DEKALB	189	23	MADISON	773	83	TIPPECANOE	1,154	169
DELAWARE	1,253	140	MARION	5,020	720	TIPTON	58	21
DUBOIS	310	42	MARSHALL	284	76	UNION	47	9
ELKHART	986	160	MARTIN	120	24	VANDEBURGH	1,451	182
FAYETTE	113	16	MIAMI	218	50	VERMILLION	68	17
FLOYD	496	75	MONROE	768	99	VIGO	733	125
FOUNTAIN	105	12	MONTGOMERY	281	40	WABASH	306	45
FRANKLIN	81	15	MORGAN	274	38	WARREN	52	11
FULTON	85	20	NEWTON	38	13	WARRICK	203	37
GIBSON	221	35	NOBLE	203	30	WASHINGTON	259	37
GRANT	983	107	OHIO	31	2	WAYNE	722	114
GREENE	247	53	ORANGE	198	33	WELLS	106	17
HAMILTON	566	107	OWEN	91	14	WHITE	188	54
HANCOCK	236	40	PARKE	78	25	WHITLEY	128	24
HARRISON	211	27	PERRY	136	23	OUT OF STATE	57	19
						NOT KNOWN	2	0
						STATEWIDE	37,524	5,961

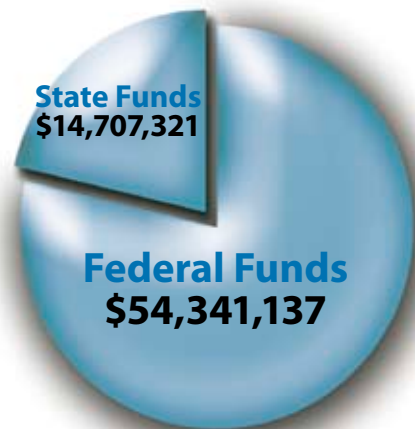
◀ The numbers of customers served in Status 02-33 and rehabilitated by county as seen on the left.



VRS STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS

- During FFY 2005, net authorizations (authorizations plus supplements minus cancellations) were written for case services totaling \$51,649,796.96 on behalf of 21,160 individuals with disabilities, in addition to the direct provision of counseling, guidance, and placement services by Vocational Rehabilitation staff.
- The increase in annual earnings from application for services to case closure for the individuals placed in competitive labor market jobs during FFY 2005 in Indiana was \$41,116,556 (or \$7,214.70 per person placed). Nationally, the annual investment made by taxpayers in Vocational Rehabilitation is fully paid back in two to four years.
- A total of 1,366 Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries were rehabilitated during FFY 2005. Some of these had monthly earnings that equaled or exceeded Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) at case closure. If these individuals maintain earnings at or above SGA for at least nine of the first 12 months of employment, the Social Security Administration will reimburse Vocational Rehabilitation Services for eligible case service costs.
- For the first time, some beneficiaries achieved milestones or outcomes that triggered Ticket to Work payments during FFY 2005.
- During FFY 2005, Indiana received \$542,815.05 in reimbursement, milestone, and outcome payments from the Social Security Administration.

Overall funding level for Vocational Rehabilitation Services during Federal FY 2005 is shown below.



Total Funds Available
\$69,048,459



VRS GOALS AND PRIORITIES

As required under section 101(a)(15)(E)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, the Indiana Commission on Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Rehabilitation Services annually prepare, agree to, and submit to the Rehabilitation Services Administration Commissioner a report on the activities and progress of Vocational Rehabilitation Services in meeting its goals and priorities. The State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services includes the following information.

AGENCY GOAL: **to increase the number of people with disabilities in integrated, competitive employment**

OBJECTIVE A: **VR customers will have easy access to, and quick delivery of, services. If Indiana implements an Order of Selection, all customers in a served category will have easy access and quick delivery of services.**

MILESTONES/OUTCOMES:

1. To obtain customer input on improving service delivery.

Feedback solicited from all successfully rehabilitated customers via the Customer Satisfaction Survey sponsored by the Commission on Rehabilitation Services. Vocational Rehabilitation also routinely requests taskforce and workgroup representation on the part of primary advocacy groups and stakeholders.

2. Customers will have access to VR services in all 92 counties by the development and implementation of a standard of accessibility for all places in which VR has a presence.

This goal was accomplished.

3. To comply with all of the Ticket to Work legislation as an employment network in order to serve individuals who are receiving SSI/SSDI benefits, and to partner with Maximus and employment networks.

VR has provided leadership in cooperation with Indiana's Medicaid Buy-in (Med Works) Program, Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) through the Employment Leadership Group, Benefit Information Network, Business Leadership Network.

OBJECTIVE B: **All staff will be hired per the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD.) (Objective modified 2002)**

MILESTONES/OUTCOMES:

State Plan Attachment 4.11(b) - Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.



VRS GOALS AND PRIORITIES

OBJECTIVE C: The VR staff will operate a quality VR program

MILESTONES/OUTCOMES:

1. Adherence to the RSA approved state plan.

This goal was met.

2. Staff will be provided in-service training, as needed, and ongoing professional development that supports staff in the maintenance of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) accreditation.

This goal was met.

OBJECTIVE D: VR customers will have a seamless and customer responsive delivery system

MILESTONES/OUTCOMES:

1. The VR customer will have access to an improved and streamlined system of intake and service delivery in One Stop Centers. This includes the development/maintenance of electronic linkages.

VR has a presence in all WorkOne Centers. VR Management staff meet quarterly with DWD Management staff to develop a plan to maximize co-location opportunities and improve cooperative relationships between the two Agencies.

2. VR will advocate, promote, and extend VR customer service focus to all partners.

This goal was met. VR is sponsoring several workgroups to improve service delivery and employment outcomes for VR customers. All partners are participants in these workgroups.

3. VR will work with the Department of Education and local school systems to improve school to work transition programs for students with disabilities.

This goal was met. The transition PPM Chapter was revised to allow earlier VR participation in the transition process. There is a signed cooperative agreement between DDRS and DOE. VR and DOE are jointly surveying all public high schools and VR offices to determine the status of transition relationships statewide.

OBJECTIVE E: VR customers will be assured the opportunity for successful employment consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, interests, abilities, and capabilities.



VRS GOALS AND PRIORITIES

MILESTONES/OUTCOMES:

1. Each VR customer will be provided as many informed choices as practical as it relates to his/her placement opportunities.

This goal was met.

2. On-going provision of training for VR staff and customers on informed choice and self-determination.

This goal was met.

3. Collaboration with partners and stakeholders in the VR process to ensure front line, as well as administrative staff, support customers to obtain employment, and are knowledgeable in those skills necessary for a successful employment outcome.

VR initiated a collaborative initiative between all primary partners and stakeholders to establish ongoing coordination of staff training to maximize professional skills of staff responsible for employment opportunities for persons with significant disabilities.

4. VR will emphasize reimbursement to providers for successful outcomes by means of piloting results-based funding.

The results-based funding (RBF) initiative is still in an active pilot status. Final determination about RBF will not occur prior to December 2005.

OBJECTIVE F: The VR program administration will function effectively and efficiently, supporting all aspects of the VR program.

MILESTONES/OUTCOMES:

1. Refinement of an automated case management system.

Many upgrades and edits have been implemented. Management has mandated routine use of specific IRIS reports to improve fiscal accountability and customer service delivery. Upgrades to the IRIS system continue to be a priority.

2. Processes and practices that are duplicative will be examined and streamlined.

This is ongoing.

3. Ensure that staff has the tools to do their jobs. Includes resource allocation, caseload size examination, morale, etc.

Resource allocation, caseload size and needed resources are standing items on monthly Management meeting agendas.



VRS GOALS AND PRIORITIES

4. Investigation of a “financial means test” for customers who are accessing VR services.

This item was under investigation during FFY 2005, to include the completion of a preliminary draft.

5. VR will work to increase fiscal resources by maximizing reimbursement through TANF, SSA/VR, Ticket-to-Work, and relevant state and federal grants.

SSA/VR and Ticket to Work are key priorities as evidenced by the workgroups cited in Objective A, number 3. VR has a cooperative agreement with the agency administering TANF whereby services provided by VR to TANF recipients are reimbursed by TANF.

INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES

Indiana Innovation and Expansion funds (Title I) are contracted to the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community to support the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Center on Community Living and Careers (CCLC), which is a continuation of the Indiana Systems Change Project. Activities by the IIDC included: transition from school to work and conversion from segregated sheltered work to community based competitive employment, supported through training and technical assistance.



INDIANA'S FFY 2005 PERFORMANCE ON THE FEDERAL EVALUATION STANDARDS

Performance Indicator 1.1

The total number of rehabilitations recorded in the current Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) compared to the previous year's total.

Standard: Equal or exceed previous performance period.

During FFY 2005, Indiana recorded 5,961 rehabilitations as compared to 5,021 in FFY 2004, which is above standard. The 940 additional rehabilitations represented an 18.7% increase over last year's total.

Performance Indicator 1.2

The total number of rehabilitations divided by the sum of the number of rehabilitations plus the number of Status 28 closures (the New Rehabilitation Rate).

Standard: 55.8%.

During FFY 2005, Indiana achieved a New Rehabilitation Rate of 49.1%, which was below the standard. This rate represents a 6.8 percentage point decrease from the FFY 2004 rate of 55.9%

Performance Indicator 1.3

(Primary) The percentage of rehabilitants who achieve a competitive employment outcome with an hourly wage at or above the Federal Minimum Wage of \$5.15. Competitive employment includes self and Business Enterprise Program employment.

Standard: 72.6%.

During FFY 2005, 95.6% of Indiana's rehabilitants were closed in competitive employment earning at least the Federal Minimum Wage. Indiana's percent exceeded the standard by 23.0 percentage points which satisfied the performance requirement. It also represents a 0.8 of a percentage point increase over Indiana's FFY 2004 percentage.

Performance Indicator 1.4

(Primary) The percentage of all competitively placed rehabilitants earning at least the Federal Minimum Wage who have significant disabilities.

Standard: 62.4%.

In FFY 2005, 69.0% of Indiana's competitively placed rehabilitants earning at least the Federal Minimum Wage had significant disabilities. This figure exceeds the standard by 6.6 percentage points, which satisfied this performance requirement. However, this year's percentage represents a 23.0 percentage point decline from last year's percentage of 92.0%.



INDIANA'S FFY 2005 PERFORMANCE ON THE FEDERAL EVALUATION STANDARDS

Performance Indicator 1.5

(Primary) The ratio between the average hourly wage of competitive rehabilitants making at least the Federal Minimum Wage and the State of Indiana's average hourly wage for all employed individuals. In 2004, the latest year for which wage data are available, the State of Indiana's average hourly wage was \$16.48.

Standard: 0.52 (Ratio).

The average hourly wage for Indiana's FFY 2005 competitive rehabilitants making at least the Federal Minimum Wage was \$11.24. Dividing \$11.24 by \$16.48 yields a ratio of 0.68, which exceeds the standard of 0.52. Therefore, this performance requirement was satisfied. By comparison, in FFY 2004 the average hourly wage of competitive rehabilitants was \$10.89, the State's 2003 average hourly wage was \$16.05 (the latest figure available at the time), and the ratio was 0.68. Performance Indicator 1.6 The difference between the percentages of competitively placed rehabilitants making at least the Federal Minimum Wage who say their personal income was their largest single source of support at case closure and those who say their personal income was their largest single source of support when they applied for services. Personal income includes earnings, rent, interest, and dividends.

Standard: 53.0 (mathematical difference).

During FFY 2005, 80.6% of the competitively placed rehabilitants earning at least the Federal Minimum Wage said that their personal income was their largest single source of support at closure. At application, 47.0% of this group reported that personal income was their largest single source of support. The difference between these two percentages was 33.6, which is smaller than the 53.0 standard for this indicator. Therefore, Indiana failed to achieve this performance requirement.

By comparison, during FFY 2004, 78.9% of the competitively placed rehabilitants earning at least the Federal Minimum Wage said that their personal income was their largest single source of support at closure. At application, 43.9% of this group reported that personal income was their largest single source of support. The difference between these two percentages was 35.0, which is smaller than the 53.0 standard for this indicator.

Performance Indicator 2.1

The ratio of the service rate for minorities to the service rate for whites. The service rate for minorities is obtained by dividing the number of minorities who exited the program after receiving services under an IPE by the total number of minorities who exited the program. Similarly, the service rate for whites is



INDIANA'S FFY 2005 PERFORMANCE ON THE FEDERAL EVALUATION STANDARDS

obtained by dividing the number of whites who exited the program after receiving services under an IPE by the total number of whites who exited the program (i.e. $[26's+28's]/[02-08's+06-08's+26's+28's+30's]$).

Standard: 0.80 (Ratio).

The service rate for minorities during FFY 2005 was 60.3%. Similarly, the service rate for whites was 67.0% for the same time period. Dividing the minority service rate by the white service rate yields a ratio of 0.90, which is greater than the standard of 0.80. Consequently, Indiana satisfied this performance requirement.

By comparison, the service rate for minorities in FFY 2004 was 53.8% while the service rate for whites was 61.7%. Consequently, dividing the minority rate by the white rate yielded a ratio of 0.87.

Since Indiana's performance equaled or exceeded the standard on four of the six employment outcome indicators, including all three primary indicators, and exceeded the standard for the equal access indicator, it has avoided participating in an improvement plan for FFY 2005.



FOCUS 2006

During 2006, the Commission will continue to develop mechanisms to ensure public participation in meetings. The dates, times, and locations of the meetings are posted on the State agency website, and each meeting is also posted at the location with 48 hours notice in accordance with the Open Door Law. Each Commission agenda includes a standard time for Open Forum comments from the public.

Positive measures continue to be initiated by the Commission to ensure that the Commission's duties and functions are achieved, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act. In 2005, the Commission presented information and provided a forum for public comment during the annual conference of the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, the ARC of Indiana conference, the fall conference of the IN Association for Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD), the IN*SOURCE (Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs) conference, and the Brain Injury Association of Indiana annual conference. The measures being taken by the Commission to network with other Governor appointed Boards, Councils, and Commissions will continue during federal fiscal year 2006.

In addressing the status of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services program, the Commission recognizes that Indiana's Vocational Rehabilitation Services has undertaken many important initiatives during the past fiscal year and continues to build on these accomplishments. The Commission enjoys a very positive working relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation Services and supports their efforts to improve customer service and the service delivery system.

Through the establishment of committees, the Commission members have been able to more clearly focus on specific issues in a timely manner. The Commission will annually examine the effectiveness of the current committees and will then determine the need for changes in committee functions and/or the inclusion or discontinuance of specific committees.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development are working in partnership to improve services to Indiana's citizens with disabilities. Collaborative initiatives include co-locating offices to maximize access to information and services. Steps are also being taken to address accessibility issues at the One-Stop Centers and identify methods for sharing data and making the service delivery system customer friendly.

As the Commission looks to the future, its members will work in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to develop, agree to, and review the State's Goals and Priorities. During federal fiscal year 2006, the Commission will also continue to focus attention on customer satisfaction and outreach efforts to increase public awareness of the Commission and customer participation. Measures will be taken to enhance the visibility of the Commission and provide linkages to other agencies and programs, resulting in greater public awareness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program.



REACHING OUT

The Indiana Commission on Rehabilitation Services would like to know your opinion about how Vocational Rehabilitation Services is meeting your needs. We will use this information to help us learn how well Vocational Rehabilitation Services is meeting its customers' expectations. It will also help us recommend improvements in vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in Indiana.

We would also like to hear from you if you wish to:

- know more about the Commission;
- share your ideas with us;
- attend a future Commission meeting; or
- be considered for appointment to the Commission.

You can contact the Commission:

by mail:

**Indiana Commission on Rehabilitation Services
c/o Vocational Rehabilitation Services
402 W. Washington Street, (MS-20)
P.O. Box 7083
Indianapolis, Indiana 46207-7083**

by phone:

**(317) 232-1350
Toll Free: 1-800-545-7763, extension 1350
TTY: (317) 232-1427**

by fax:

(317) 232-6478

by e-mail:

kathy.sodeman@fssa.IN.gov

For further information about Vocational Rehabilitation Services or the Commission on Rehabilitation Services, please visit the world-wide web at:

www.IN.gov/fssa/servicedisabl/vr/index.html



NOTES



NOTES





State of Indiana

Family and Social Services Administration

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www.IN.gov/fssa

The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, age, disability, national origin, or ancestry.

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